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GAO SAYS AIR TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS NEEDED TO EASE CONTROLLER WORKLOAD

General Accounting Office said the Federal Aviation Administration should "impose restrictions on air traffic" until the agency achieves its goals for the number of full performance level controllers and reducing overtime requirements, following a study of the air traffic system from July 1981 to September 1985.

In its study, GAO found that although most controllers, supervisors and managers rate the overall safety of the ATC system as adequate to excellent, many expressed concern about their ability to maintain system safety. Managers said FAA does not have enough fully qualified experienced controllers as needed and called for by FAA's own standards and goals. GAO said it could be expected that the controller deficiency will worsen as controllers, especially those at key facilities, retire. The study found that the number of retirees will be far greater than FAA has projected because of employe concern over proposed changes in the federal retirement system and "dissatisfaction with FAA management." GAO also found FPL controllers feel they are spending approximately 25 percent more time at a radar control position without a break than managers believe they should. High workload is compounded by the shortage of radar controllers, inadequate flow control procedures and airline schedules and air traffic sector configuration.

Controllers are "being stretched too thin," said GAO, which could "in time, impair their ability to continue to maintain the proper margin of safety." Because qualified controllers cannot be produced immediately, GAO concluded, "the only options that remain are to continue to stretch them, or to limit the air traffic they are responsible for. Limiting air traffic before conditions worsen seems to be the prudent choice."

ITC REPORT GIVES MIXED SIGNALS ON COMPETITIVENESS OF U.S. FIRMS

A detailed report by the U.S. International Trade Commission on the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers in the commuter and business aircraft markets indicates foreign manufacturers will increase their domination of the commuter/regional airline market, while U.S. firms will continue as a major factor in the world market for privately operated business aircraft.

The ITC report, which was issued Friday in Washington, states that "the future competitiveness of the U.S. commuter aircraft industry will be limited to an extremely narrow and declining segment of the market." ITC said it did not know what effect the acquisition of Canadian manufacturer de Havilland by Boeing will have on the situation, since the acquisition was so recent (BA, Dec. 9/186). Because domestic manufacturers do not build aircraft for more than 19 passengers, ITC concluded that "foreign producers will dominate future markets since the majority of future commuter aircraft purchases are expected to be for airplanes capable of transporting 30-50 passengers."

U.S. business aircraft manufacturers are "expected to remain an important force in the world market," according to the ITC report, which noted that "domestic producers are present in all sectors of the market and are at the forefront of many new technology applications. These factors, along with their broadly established marketing relationships in the world market, strong corporate backing and sizable capital and research investments, should assist U.S. manufacturers in remaining competitive."

(Continued on the following page)

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BUSINESS AVIATION BRIEFS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION examination of the competitiveness of the U.S. aircraft manufacturing industry states that "imports of commuter and business aircraft totaled $3.5 billion during 1980-84." Imports, combined with a severe slump in demand, escalating product liability costs and a burgeoning used aircraft market led to a significant decline in U.S. producers' sales. As a result, ITC said "physical production capacity utilization (by U.S. aircraft manufacturers) declined from 70 percent in 1981 to 18 percent in 1984."

* * *

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION has proposed new noise standards for civil helicopters in the normal, transport and restricted categories and test procedures for the issuance of original and amended type certificates. New standards proposed would not limit the continued production of non-complying helicopter types already certificated. Proposal was published in the March 6 Federal Register.

* * *

AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION, in its proposal for major changes in the Airport and Airway Improvement Act, recommended that airport operators be required to consider proposals from prospective fixed-base operators that want to provide limited commercial activities on the airport. AOPA said this would insure competition among FBOs.

* * *

GULFSTREAM AEROSPACE plans to establish a product support center at the Long Beach, Calif. completion center it is acquiring from Garrett. Gulfstream officials said the product support operation will be an extension of the Savannah, Ga. factory.

* * *

LAST GULFSTREAM III scheduled for completion by Garrett AiResearch at the Long Beach facility is one scheduled for delivery to Lee Iacocca, chairman of Gulfstream's parent company, Chrysler Corp.

* * *

CESSNA AIRCRAFT plans to display a military version of the Caravan I—designated the U-27A—at the Army Aviation Association of America convention in Atlanta next month before taking the aircraft on a tour of Army installations.

* * *

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'S latest 10-year forecast calls for U.S. regional/commuter airlines to carry 48.6 million passengers in 1997, more than double the 21.7 million carried in 1985. A breakdown of commuter/regional traffic projections, estimates of fleet composition and estimates of the active general aviation fleet for the next 10 years are shown in charts on the backs of Pages 77-79.

* * *

PRODUCT LIABILITY CRISIS in the general aviation industry will be the subject of a two-day symposium in the Washington, D.C. area being sponsored by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. The symposium will feature representatives of aircraft manufacturers, fixed-base operators, the insurance industry and attorneys who handle product liability cases. Meeting will be held April 1-2 at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel in Alexandria, Va. For more information, contact John Sheehan at AOPA, (202) 428-9530.

* * *

AIR MIDWEST'S SYSTEM LOAD FACTOR fell to 36.8 percent during February, the carrier reported Friday, compared to a load factor of 40.4 percent in February 1985. The Wichita-based regional boarded 56,598 passengers last month, up 4.8 percent over the same month a year ago. ASMs fell 6.4 percent to 24.4 million and RPMs dropped 14.1 percent to just over nine million, reflecting "the company's withdrawal from several markets in New Mexico, Texas and Arkansas."

U.S. REGIONAL/COMMUTER AIR CARRIERS
SCHEDULED PASSENGER TRAFFIC
(Millions)

FISCAL YEAR	REVENUE PASSENGER ENPLANEMENTS			REVENUE PASSENGER MILES		
	48 STATES	HAWAII/ PUERTO RICO/ VIRGIN ISLANDS	TOTAL	48 STATES	HAWAII/ PUERTO RICO/ VIRGIN ISLANDS	TOTAL
Historical*						
1980	12.4	1.5	13.9	1,676.1	107.8	1,783.9
1981	14.2	1.8	16.0	2,004.0	136.8	2,140.8
1982	15.6	2.2	17.8	2,278.3	187.4	2,465.7
1983	17.8	2.5	20.3	2,703.1	240.1	2,943.2
1984	20.9	2.8	23.7	3,334.3	276.8	3,611.1
1985E	21.7	2.5	24.2	3,564.0	250.3	3,814.3
Forecast						
1986	23.2	2.7	25.9	3,920.8	271.4	4,192.2
1987	25.3	2.9	28.2	4,376.9	292.9	4,669.8
1988	27.7	3.2	30.9	4,889.1	316.8	5,205.9
1989	30.0	3.5	33.5	5,400.0	346.5	5,746.5
1990	31.2	3.8	35.0	5,709.6	376.2	6,085.8
1991	34.0	4.1	38.1	6,324.0	405.9	6,729.9
1992	36.3	4.4	40.7	6,842.6	435.6	7,278.2
1993	38.6	4.7	43.3	7,372.6	465.3	7,837.9
1994	41.0	5.0	46.0	7,933.5	495.0	8,428.5
1995	43.8	5.3	49.1	8,562.9	524.7	9,087.6
1996	45.2	5.6	50.8	8,927.0	554.4	9,481.4
1997	48.6	5.9	54.5	9,695.7	584.1	10,279.8

* Source: RSPA, Form 298-C

E = Estimate

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U.S. REGIONAL/COMMUTER AIR CARRIERS
PASSENGER AIRCRAFT

AS OF JANUARY 1	LESS THAN 15 SEATS	15 - 19 SEATS	20 - 40 SEATS	MORE THAN 40 SEATS	TOTAL
Historical*					
1980	861	365	101	86	1413
1981	734	383	99	97	1313
1982	716	433	117	122	1388
1983	701	493	125	175	1494
1984	569	533	147	172	1421
1985E	618	560	154	203	1535
Forecast					
1986	620	567	176	209	1572
1987	592	580	198	216	1586
1988	575	595	240	230	1640
1989	551	610	315	250	1726
1990	541	618	392	270	1821
1991	510	628	475	296	1909
1992	502	642	507	327	1978
1993	480	654	536	361	2031
1994	441	668	568	399	2076
1995	401	683	597	441	2122
1996	359	693	639	493	2184
1997	320	714	670	541	2245

* Source: FAA Aircraft Utilization and Propulsion Reliability Report

E = Estimate

ACTIVE GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT
(Thousands)

AS OF JANUARY 1	FIXED WING				ROTORCRAFT			
	PISTON							
	SINGLE ENGINE	MULTI-ENGINE	TURBOPROP	TURBOJET	PISTON	TURBINE	OTHER	TOTAL
Historical*								
1980	168.4	25.1	3.5	2.7	3.1	2.7	4.8	210.3
1981	168.4	24.6	4.1	3.0	2.8	3.2	4.9	211.0
1982	167.9	25.5	4.7	3.2	3.3	3.7	5.0	213.3
1983	164.2	25.0	5.2	4.0	2.4	3.7	5.2	209.7
1984	166.4	25.1	5.5	3.9	2.5	4.0	5.9	213.3
1985	171.9	25.5	5.8	4.3	2.9	4.2	6.3	220.9
Forecast								
1986	166.4	25.6	6.1	4.6	2.8	4.6	6.4	216.5
1987	166.9	26.0	6.4	4.9	2.8	5.0	6.7	218.7
1988	167.9	26.4	6.6	5.2	2.7	5.3	7.0	221.1
1989	169.6	26.9	6.9	5.5	2.6	5.6	7.3	224.4
1990	172.4	27.3	7.2	5.7	2.6	6.0	7.6	228.8
1991	175.8	27.7	7.5	5.9	2.5	6.3	7.9	233.6
1992	178.7	28.0	7.8	6.2	2.5	6.8	8.3	238.3
1993	182.0	28.3	8.1	6.5	2.5	7.1	8.6	243.1
1994	185.3	28.6	8.4	6.7	2.4	7.7	8.9	248.0
1995	188.9	28.9	8.7	6.9	2.4	8.0	9.2	253.0
1996	191.0	29.2	9.0	7.1	2.3	8.3	9.5	256.4
1997	193.2	29.5	9.3	7.3	2.2	8.6	9.7	259.8

* Source: FAA Statistical Handbook of Aviation

Notes: Detail may not add to total because of independent rounding.

An active aircraft must have a current registration and it must have been flown at least one hour during the previous calendar year.